

Application No. 10/684,671
Amendment dated January 11, 2006
Reply to Office Action of October 12, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Responsive to the Official Action mailed October 12, 2005, applicants have amended the claims of their application in an earnest effort to place this case in condition for allowance. Specifically, claim 20 has been cancelled, and independent claim 14 amended. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In the Action, the Examiner has rejected the pending claims under 35 U.S.C. §103, with reliance upon U.S. Patent No. 4,925,722, to Jeffers et al., in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,458,962, to Birch. However, it is respectfully submitted that these references, even when combined, do not teach or suggest applicants' novel nonwoven fabric for buffing applications, as claimed, and accordingly, the Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed in the Specification, the present nonwoven fabric has been particularly formulated and configured for use in buffing applications, which typically entails use of a powered buffing device, and associated buffing compound. Several performance criteria become very important for such applications. First, a nonwoven fabric for such applications must exhibit sufficient durability to withstand the rigors of powered buffing, including heat that can be generated in connection with the buffing operation. To this end, the present fabric has been specifically configured to be sufficiently heavy, as represented by the claimed basis weight, to provide desired buffing performance, with these characteristics quantified by the claimed tensile strength and Taber Abrasion of the present fabric.

Further, as discussed at page 5 of the Specification, the polymers of the binder composition, as claimed, desirably cooperate to provide the desired level of durability for buffing applications, and also act to abate deposition of any polyester residue, which can result from

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degradation of polyester fibers, from which the fabric can be formed, from heat generated during buffing.

In clear distinction from the prior art, the present nonwoven fabric has a three-dimensional image imparted thereto, which image can be imparted through the use of three-dimensional image transfer devices such as illustrated in the application. Notably, three-dimensional imaging of the fabric desirably facilitates retention of associated buffing compounds. It is respectfully noted that such a feature is neither taught nor suggested by the prior art.

Applicants respectfully note that the principal Jeffers et al. patent is directed to a "semi-durable wipe", and thus cannot teach or suggest features of the present invention, whereby the present fabric is suited for powered buffing applications. This is evident from the relatively low basis weight of the fabric disclosed in Jeffers et al. Moreover, there is clearly *no teaching* of this reference of three-dimensional imaging of the fabric, much less of the provision of such imaging for retention of an associated compound. Rather, Jeffers et al. contemplates formation of a typical "flat" nonwoven fabric, such as by formation on woven metal screens.

It is respectfully noted that the secondary Birch reference does not overcome the deficiencies in the teachings of the primary Jeffers et al. patent. It is respectfully noted that the Birch reference does not teach or suggest formation of a nonwoven fabric suited for powered buffing applications, does not teach or suggest a fabric having the structural/performance characteristics specified in applicants' claims, and does not teach or suggest formation of a three-dimensionally imaged fabric for enhancing retention of an associated buffing compound. Additionally, it is believed that applicants' claimed fabric is further distinct from the teachings of

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Birch in view of applicants' specified ranges for the components of the claimed binder composition.

Applicants respectfully refer to M.P.E.P. Section 2143.03, which specifically requires that "all claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art", and requires that "all words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art". In this context, it is respectfully submitted that the combined teachings of the Jeffers et al. and Birch references do not teach or suggest the features of applicants' novel nonwoven fabric construct, as claimed.

In view of the foregoing, formal allowance of claims 14, 17, and 18, is believed to be in order and is respectfully solicited. Should the Examiner wish to speak with applicants' attorneys, they may be reached at the number indicated below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required in connection with this submission to Deposit Account No. 23-0785.

Respectfully submitted,

By _____

Stephen D. Geimer, Reg. No. 28,846

WOOD, PHILLIPS, KATZ, CLARK & MORTIMER
500 West Madison Street, Suite 3800
Chicago, Illinois 60661-2511
312/876-1800

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this paper is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage at First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 on **January 11, 2006**.